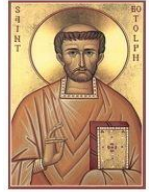




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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Admin: Denis Pepper, 17, Cliffe House, Radnor Cliff, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2TY. Tel: +44 (0)1303 221-777 botolph@virginmedia.com
President: Revd Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

Issue Number: 56

1st December 2017

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, Heene, West Sussex.
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following members: Matthew Harffy (Wiltshire), Father Robert Godding (Société des Bollandistes, Brussels).
- Correspondence from Duncan Hopkin, Peter Van Demark, Carole Kner, Hannah Weisman and Matthew Harffy.

Editorial

There is not a lot to write in the editorial this month as Zina and I recover from the excitement of our visit to Boston and prepare for the Christmas festivities.

We wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year and look forward to meeting you around and about and perhaps at the Annual Luncheon which I have scheduled for **Wednesday 24th October 2018**. This is not yet cast in stone however so please let me know if that date is particularly difficult for you.

Church Feature

H

Heene, West Sussex.

Approach: From the A27 coastal road travelling west, head towards Chichester on the Upper Brighton Road. At Grove Lodge Roundabout take the first exit onto the A24 towards Worthing but take the right hand lane and immediately turn right following the signs to the A24. Follow the

A2032 South Farm Road going straight on at each roundabout until after 1500 metres you reach an area of shops. Turn right along the A2031 Tarring Road. After 500 metres turn left into Heene Road and after another 500 metres turn right into Lansdowne Road and you will find the church on your right. Road parking is readily available.

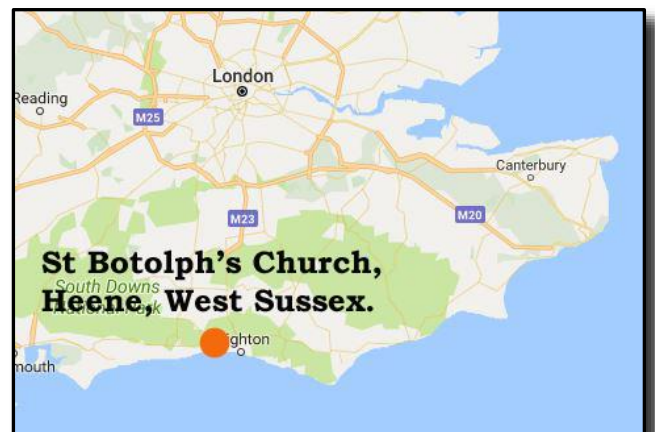
Location: Lansdowne Road, Worthing, BN11 4LY; Lat/Long 50.813755, -0.386558; NGR TQ137028.

Contacts: Churchwardens: (as listed on the website): 01903 241-673, or 01903 506-855 or churchwardens@virginmedia.com.

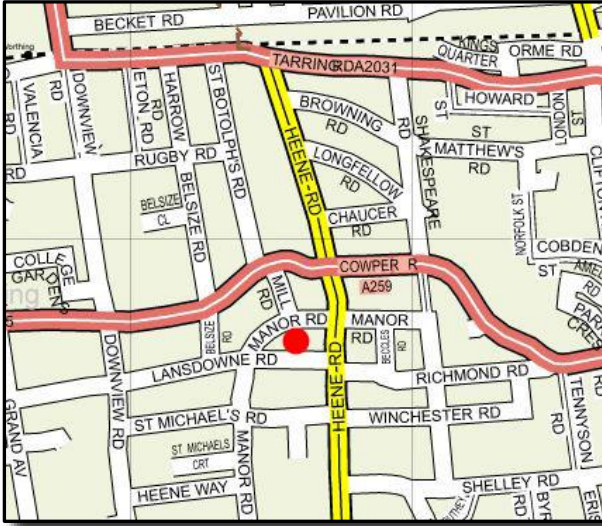
Website: <http://stbotolphsheene2015.com/>.

Services: Every Sunday there is a Sung Eucharist at 10 a.m. For other events see the website.

Listed Grade: II



I first visited St Botolph's Church, Heene on New Year's Day 2011. Sadly the church was locked and looked rather sorry for itself. The next thing I heard was via the Worthing Herald of 12th February 2012 which reported that the church was likely to be closed down and the parish divided between the three adjacent parishes.



From my point of view everything went very quiet then but it is clear that, behind the scenes, people who loved the church were working hard and a couple of years ago I heard the good news that there was a good chance that it could be rescued.



Even so, I must admit that, it being a 'modern' church, Heene did not offer the same sort of draw for me that an older one might have done, and when I started my research I expected to be disappointed.

How wrong I was!

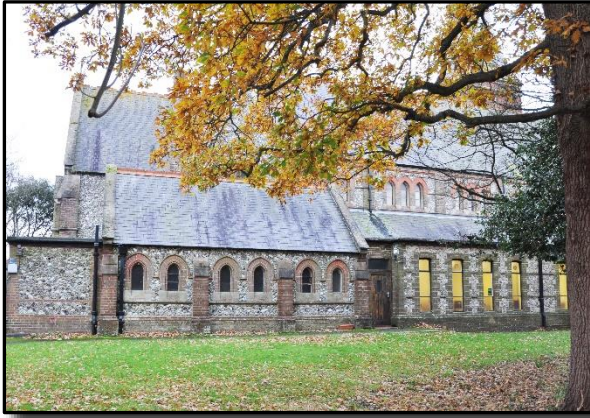
My hopes and spirits started to rise when, in response to my email asking if the church could be opened for me, I received a joint reply from the churchwardens, Diane Le Mare and Paul Wadey.



I had anticipated that the church would be in a state of limbo and would be closed for everything except the bare essential services - but on the contrary it is thriving in a truly wonderful way.



I visited last Friday (24th November 2017) and by the time that I arrived there had been a Prayer Group at 10.15, a coffee morning from 10.30 until noon, a children's recorder group from 11-11.30 and a U3A Beginners' Recorder Group from 12 till 1 p.m. This would be followed by a funeral at 3 p.m. so I had to make sure I was there by 2 p.m. so that I could squeeze into the only spare slot available in which I might take my photographs in daylight.



The sense of pro-activity did not stop there: a Sung Eucharist is held every Sunday at 10 a.m. the average attendance of which is between 42 and 45 - although this, they said modestly, depends on the weather because many in the congregation are quite elderly *and* they take holidays.

I began to realise that this is a dynamic church which is being looked after by people who really care for it. Since the threatened closure the determination to keep it open has clearly gained a lot of momentum and this momentum has of course to be maintained - but it is clearly going well at the moment. They have been without a priest for nearly four years but they are blessed by the fact that a short distance away there is a residential hall for retired priests and the church relies heavily upon them to take the services.

To have their own vicar again would of course make a huge difference to the impact they can make in the community. In the past there was a close association between the church and the local school but this has dwindled a little in the absence of a priest who could visit the school and lead services there.



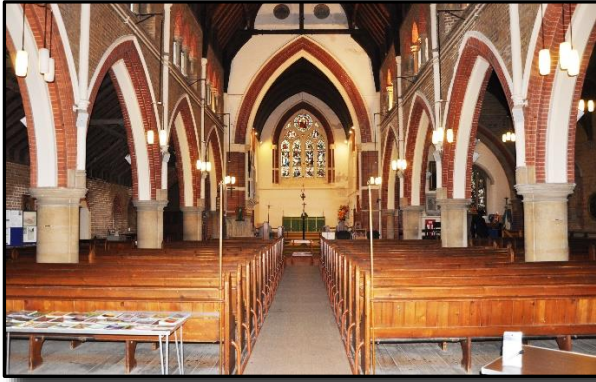
It is now time (!) to move on to the structure of the church itself - exemplified by its clock with upside-down 'Vs' on its face. It was built in 1884 by Thwaites & Reed and chimed the hours, half hours and quarters. In 1975 it was electrified but came to a standstill after the 1987 hurricane. It has recently been overhauled and converted back to mechanical operation but now has the advantage of an electric winding mechanism to lift its weights.



I am indebted to Rik Clay for these details which I have taken from the March 2017 edition of the church's magazine the Botolph Bell as seen below.



One of the many things that I enjoyed in this magazine (of which I acquired three of different months) was the regular two-page article by Liz Lane (sometimes helped by Jackie Didymus) entitled *Who's buried in Heene Cemetery?* Each month this features a different person. It is clear that a great deal of research is involved. The cemetery lies round the corner and a short way down Manor Road. Spare copies of the magazine are left on a table at the back of the church.



This picture of the Nave illustrates the pleasing contrast made between the redness of the bricks and the beige Bath stone of which the columns are constructed. Bath stone is a versatile material that can be easily cut or sawn in any direction.



The church was designed by Edmund Evan Scott and the building was consecrated on 29th September 1873. Its construction is of flint with red brick and Bath stone dressings. The roof is of Welsh slate and the spire is shingled - in fact the shingles have just been replaced. The attractive octagonal font bowl is supported by granite colonettes.



The churchyard used to be maintained by the church but in 1983 this responsibility was taken over by Worthing Borough Council.



The pulpit was installed in 1889.



Heene is very proud of its full peal of eight bells and the campanology department practise every Wednesday between 7.30 and 9 p.m. The church also has a large and talented choir. Indeed there is so much I could write about the activities of this church but I am afraid that space and time preclude my doing so. I apologise for those aspects I have had to miss out.



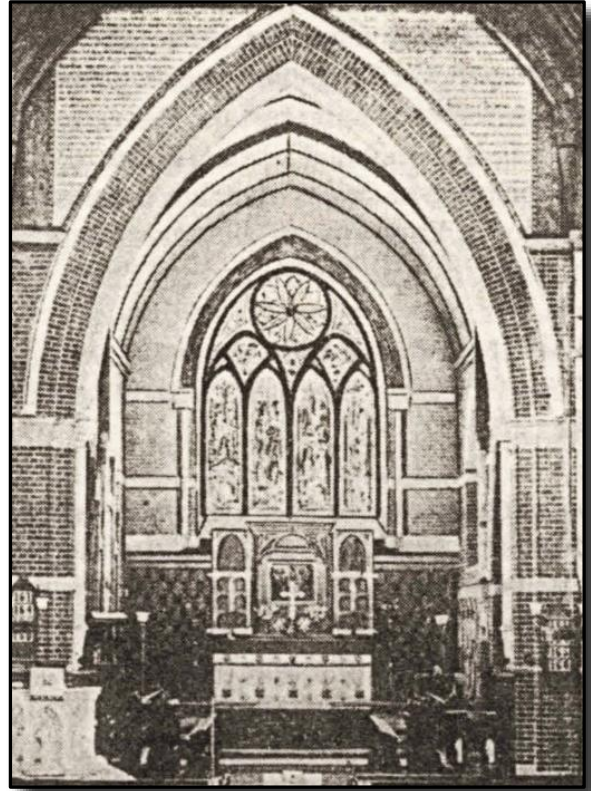
It features saints in niches . . .



. . . and some easily-missed carved stone heads.



The chancel is light and airy and features a beautiful east window.



In the 1960s the decision was made to paint the interior of the chancel white. This covered up some of the intricate ornamental brickwork seen above in a photograph from an earlier era. One assumes that the loss of structural beauty would have been offset by the advantages of a lighter chancel.



On sunny mornings the transmitted light creates a special elegance. The circular window at the top shows Christ in Majesty.



In 1881 the church acquired its first organ - made by Whitely Brothers of Chester.



A detail from the centre section which depicts the Nativity and the Crucifixion.



A second organ stands in the south aisle but this one has a large loudspeaker instead of pipes and indeed it was this instrument that was being played on the day I visited. The organist praised it highly.



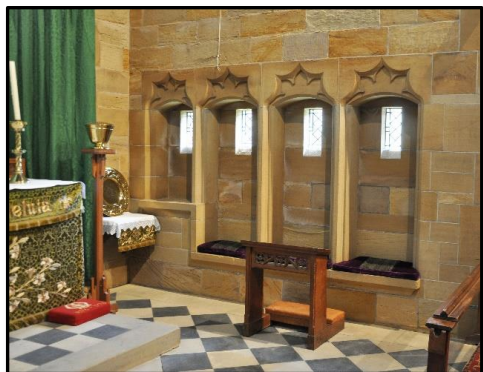
Above is a view of the *northwest* corner of the Lady Chapel. The console for the main organ is visible in the archway.



In spite of the comparative modernity of the church it has not been deprived of a piscina and triple sedilia. This made me check back to another modern St Botolph's - namely Carlton-in-Cleveland built in 1897 - to see if that is also blessed with these accoutrements and indeed it is, as you can see in the picture below. . .



Here we see a view of the *southeast* corner. From these pictures you can see that the chapel is *massive* compared to most Lady Chapels.



. . . although the Carlton sedilia are of an entirely different style. In the picture of the Heene sedilia you will have noticed, on the right hand side, a doorway. This leads into the Lady Chapel.

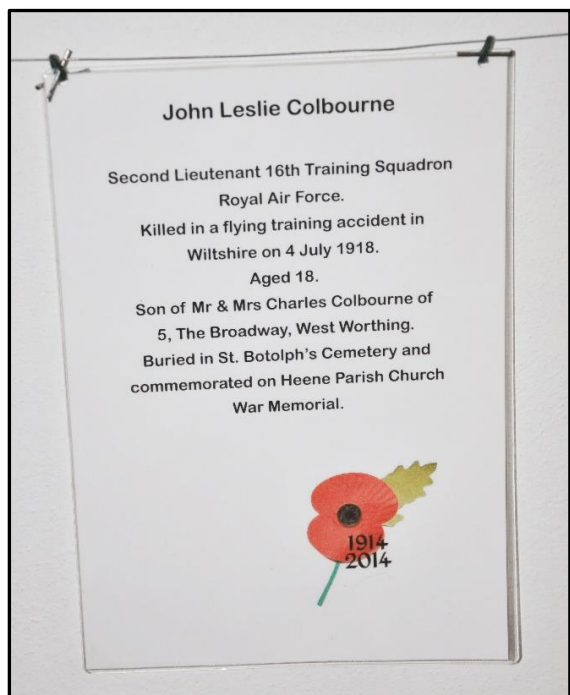
Usually, when I am photographing the outside of a church I am looking for signs of alterations and additions to the original structure. In Heene's case I had assumed that, being a young church, it was unlikely that there would have been any major structural alterations but I was in for another surprise.

By the turn of the nineteenth century the church was becoming increasingly overcrowded due to the *'continuing growth of the population plus the seasonal influx of visitors to the locality. There were frequent complaints about the absence of sittings for the local parishioners.'* This quotation is from a useful little 58-page booklet written by Muriel Huxley-Williams and published in 1973 with a second edition (1993) containing additional material by Jacqueline Simpson, Irene Saxby and Neil Turner. It contains a wealth of information although few copies are now available so I am grateful to Diane Le Mare for providing me with a copy.

By 1903 there were around 700 people clamouring to be let into the church each Sunday and so its enlargement became a matter of urgency. The petition for the faculty to do this building work contained a proposition to double the width of the north and south aisles, to make three new entrances and to rebuild the nave and enlarge the chancel. In the event only half the enlargements were made. The south aisle was widened to 20 ft and the south transept was extended about 11 ft to the south and the east. It was this which resulted in the extra large Lady Chapel.

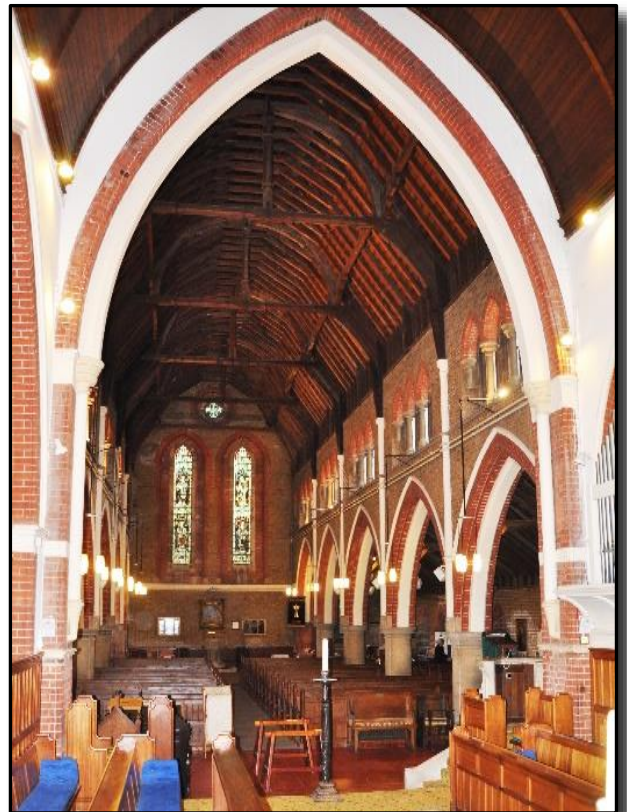


Much is made of Remembrance Day in Heene and quite rightly so. The work shown here was done by pupils at the local school. There is another view of this feature in one of the pictures above.

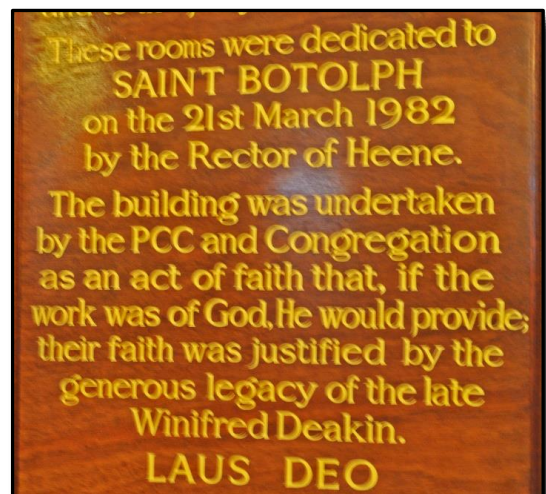


Hanging on the far wall are further details of fallen soldiers.

The end of the First World War saw a decline in church attendance and it became clear that it was just as well that the extension work had not been carried out on the north aisle too.



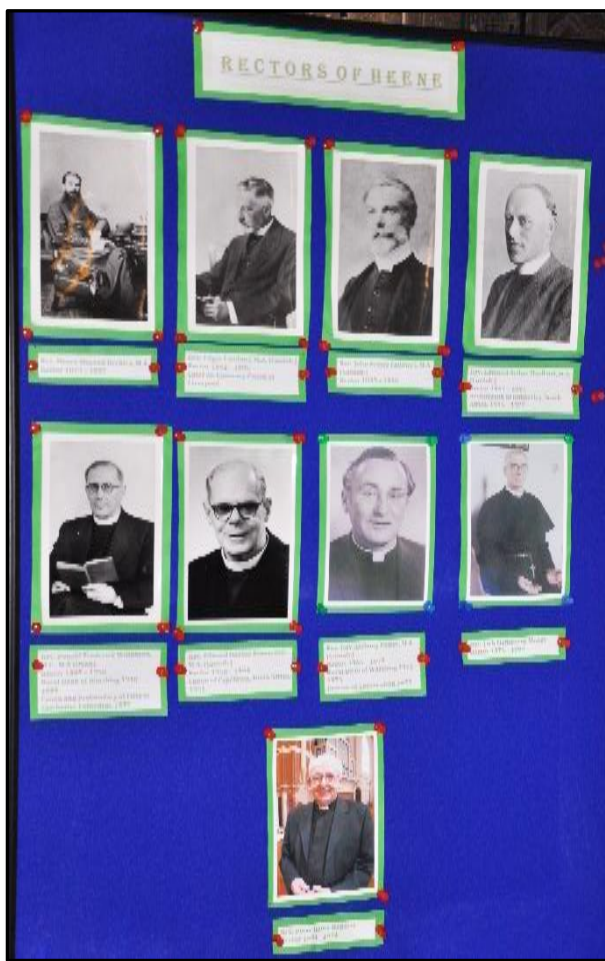
This view is looking westwards from the chancel.



For a long while the church had needed a Parish Hall where groups could meet and in 1981 the PCC decided to go ahead with the project in spite of lack of funds on the basis that "God will provide." Many donations were immediately given but, in that same month a long-time generous supporter of the church Mrs Winifred Deakin died and left a substantial legacy to the church which was sufficient to pay for the project. The photograph above shows part of a plaque located in the north aisle.

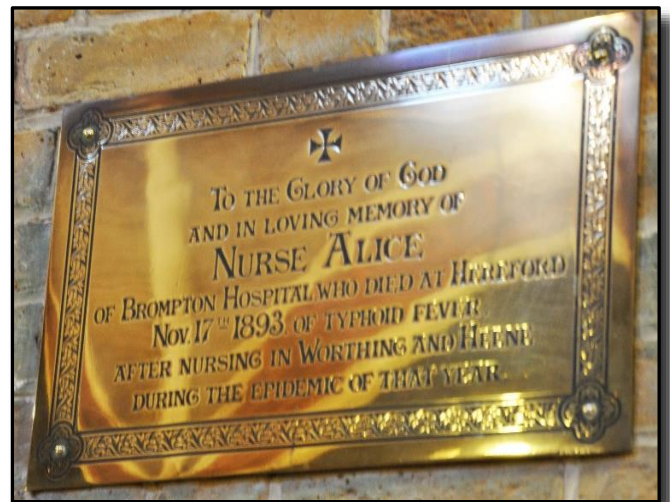
Diane Le Mare's story about the Parish Hall reminded me of the tale in the *Schleswig Breviary* where Botolph and his disciple were nearly out of food when a poor man knocked at the door seeking alms. Botolph went to give him a quarter of their last loaf but his disciple railed against this whereupon Botolph told him not to be disturbed "for God can restore it all to us. The words were hardly out of his mouth when around a bend in the river came four ships laden with food and drink that had been donated to the monastery. "

It is easy to mock hagiography but such events *do* occur and it sounds as if the money for Heene's Church Hall might have been one of them.



In the north aisle stands a series of display boards tracing the history of the church. The one shown above bears photographs the full complement of rectors the first of whom was Revd Henry McLeod Beckles who was only 26 years of age when he was inducted. He served the church faithfully and well until he died from influenza at the age of 45. The year after his death there was a severe outbreak of typhoid fever which occurred as a result of a bore hole being sunk into a source of contaminated water.

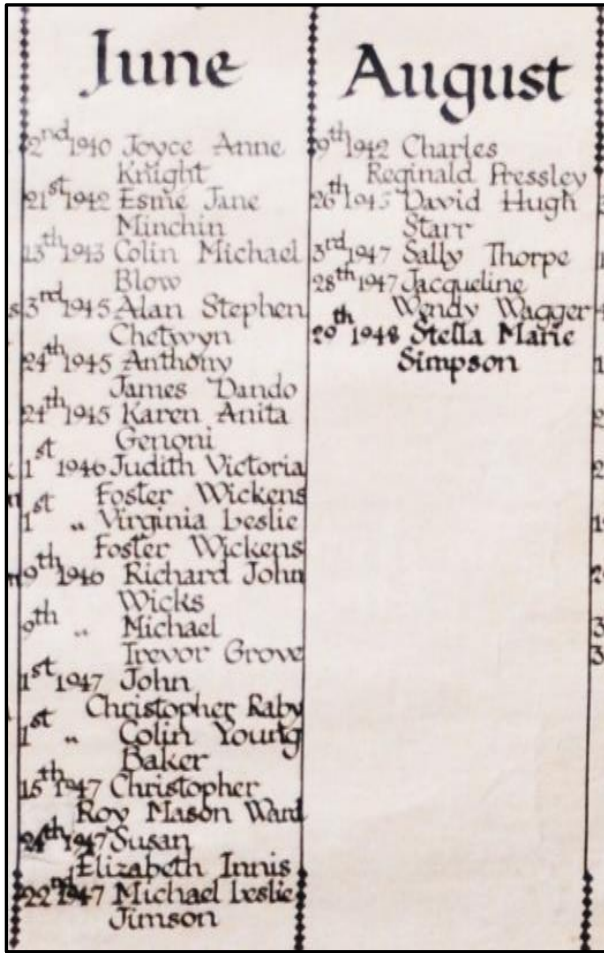
Hundreds died but there were heroes and heroines and a brass plaque in the church records one of them:



... In memory of Nurse Alice ... died 1893 of Typhoid Fever ... after nursing in Worthing and Heene during the epidemic of typhoid in that year.



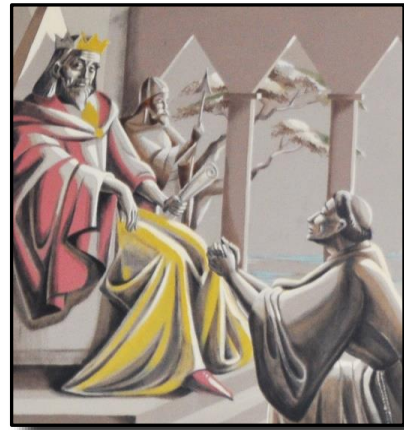
I do not recall seeing a Baptism Roll in a Botolph Church before.



As you will see in this detail, it covers the years of the Second World War and part of its function was, no doubt, to provide an easily-viewable record in those days where the death of a child or its parents could come all too unexpectedly.



At the west end of the south aisle is this rather remarkable picture (dedicated in 1961) which depicts three stages of Saint Botolph's life. On the left he is petitioning the king of East Anglia for ground upon which to build his monastery; in the middle he is blessing the marshy ground which was granted to him; on the right he is now, as an abbot, kneeling before the altar of his monastery chapel.



I rather like the quizzical look on King Anna's face as he looks towards the painter as if to say "Well, you would give him some land, wouldn't you?"

Ruins of the old church

It was another nice surprise for me when Diane led me out of the church and round to its east end to view the ruins of its predecessor. Previous churches are so often buried under the floor - but not in Heene's case.



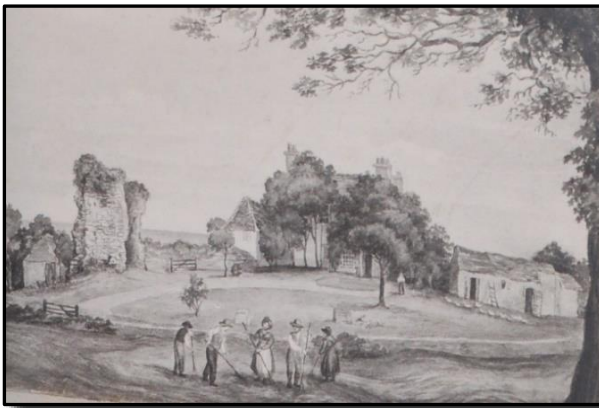
Evidence of a large (sadly non-Saxon) east window is evident together with chalk stones internally . . .



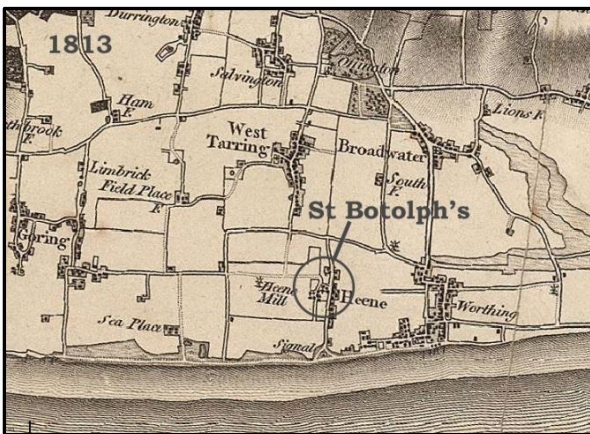
. . . and knapped flints externally.



Behind this is another relic of the past - the church's air-raid shelter - together with a bomb-blast screen.



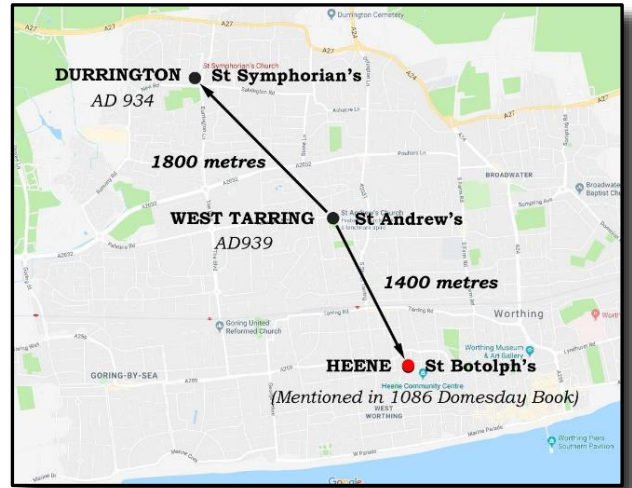
The ruins feature in many paintings of the period. A watercolour of 1841 shows the ruins on the left.



A map of 1813 illustrates an absence of houses near the site of the ruins.

Classification.

Various suggestions have been put forward for the toponymy of Heene but the current favourite is that it comes from the Saxon word *Hiun* meaning 'family' or 'household.'



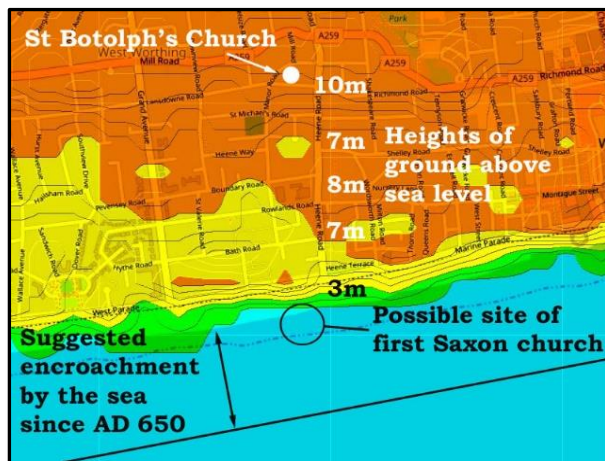
To understand this church better we must look 1400 metres to the northwest towards St Andrew's church at West Tarring. Tarring was first documented in AD 939 when King Athelstan granted its manor to Christ Church Canterbury.

In the Domesday Book (1086) it was known as *Terringes* - ('-inge,' as you will recall, means 'people of . . . 'and 'Teorra' is thought to have been the name of a Saxon settler) and is recorded as having two churches. Because Tarring and Heene have historically always been closely associated with each other, it is considered that the second of these churches refers to that at Heene. Indeed another neighbouring village, Durrington (listed in Domesday as having one church), was also closely integrated with Tarring since the early Middle Ages and it therefore seems likely that the mother church was at Tarring and that the other two were chapels. By C17 both chapels were falling into disrepair and in 1766 a faculty was issued for the destruction of the chapel at Heene.



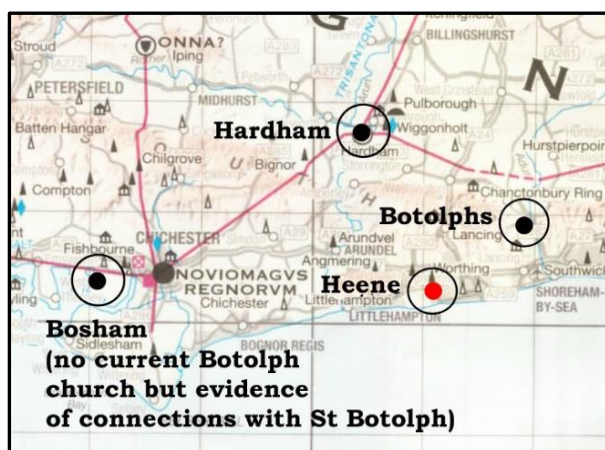
The large east window shown in old drawings and seen in the ruins today, suggests the chapel comes from the Gothic Decorated-style period of C14. According to the church literature it had an Anglo-Saxon predecessor - which of course does not surprise us since it is standard expectancy for any church dedicated to Saint Botolph.

What is a surprise is the suggestion that the earlier church was not on the current site. This is very unusual but if true could be accounted for by the fact that the records indicate that the sea has encroached on the land by 50 metres since the Middle Ages. I find 50 metres quite a conservative figure and it would not surprise me if the true distance was as much as one kilometre. In such circumstances if the original church was close to the foreshore then it might well have washed away prompting the building of a replacement further inland.

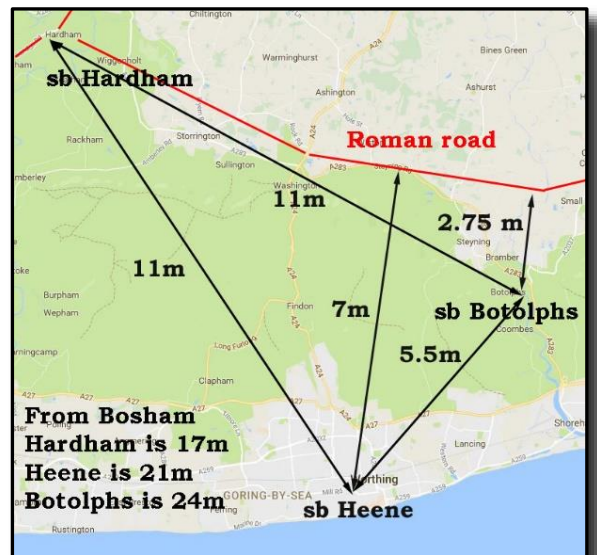


It seems likely that the Saxon church was dedicated to Saint Botolph and that that dedication has continued in its successor churches.

But we still have to ask ourselves the question "Why Botolph?" We are certainly in *Botolph Country* here with two other Saxon Saint Botolph churches being close by at Hardham and in Botolphs Village.



Twenty-one miles further to the west, the village of Bosham has also been long associated with Saint Botolph - although the evidence is tenuous.



The Heene church bucks the usual trend by being over three miles from the nearest Roman road but the nearby sea affords the alternative Botolph requirement of a 'well-used waterway.'

In conclusion I believe that this small cluster of churches strongly suggests that Saint Botolph himself was active in this area - both in Bosham, Hardham and in the village of Botolphs. I am not so sure about the Heene church which, at a distance of 725 metres from the coast, seems uncharacteristically near to the sea. I think it is more likely that the original church here was founded by Botolph's from one of the other aforementioned centres - either in C7 or (and I think this is more likely) in C10. I would therefore suggest an A(i) classification.

Thanks

My grateful thanks to Diane Le Mare and Paul Wadey at Heene for their time, hospitality and helpfulness.

Correspondence

1. **Duncan Hopkin** wrote from Folkestone: I was interested in Jane Wheeler's understanding that medieval chapels were more for praying for the dead than ordinary worship – and she may well be right. But I recall that, in the case of the wealthy in pre-Reformation medieval times in England (not Scotland that I'm aware of), Chantry Chapels could be specifically assigned to that purpose being funded by land/rents etc granted by the donor to employ a priest(s) to sing a stipulated number of masses for the benefit of the deceased's soul in a specified period immediately following death.

These masses would speed the deceased's soul through its period in Purgatory to eternal rest in Heaven. Once the soul had reached Heaven the masses would serve no further purpose.

2. **Peter Van Demark** wrote from Boston, Massachusetts saying "For WGBH's Curiosity Desk (Ed: this is Boston's local radio), Edgar Herwick interviewed me for All Saints Day about our saint. The show is at:

<http://news.wgbh.org/2017/11/01/local-news/do-you-know-saint-who-gave-boston-its-name>." [I listened to this Peter and thought that you acquitted yourself very well. Perhaps a new post is looming for you as a saintly Radio Commentator?]

3. **Carole Kner** wrote about an interesting new topic saying: Mhairi Ellis gave me your address and I am hoping that you can answer a question about St. Botolph. My interest is in connection with a poem I am writing. Several years ago I ate dinner at a restaurant in Boston, Massachusetts, called St. Botolph's and I think their menu claimed that Botolph was sainted because *he carried a hot coal against the skin of his chest from one place to another* (I've forgotten why) and it never burned him. (I don't think the restaurant exists any more [Ed: I hope it did not burn down]). Can you verify this and add to the information or, if not, tell me why Botolph was made a saint? [Ed: Thank you Carole - I answered your email but I have never heard this story before - can anybody else shed any light(!) on it?]

4. Various emails have been passing between **Hannah Weisman** of Boston Athenaeum, Father Robert of the Soci  t   des Bollandistes in Brussels and myself with a view to organising a visit for Hannah. I hope this has now taken place successfully. More details next month perhaps.

5. **Matthew Harffy**, author of *The Bernicia Chronicles*, and I have exchanged some interesting emails this month. His books are based in Botolph's era and I recognised several 'old friends' when I read his *Serpent Sword* - but there are no signs of Botolph yet.

Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to botolph@virginmedia.com if you have any alternative views to those expressed in *The Botolphian*. It is good to engender some controversy from time to time!

REGULAR END-NOTES

If this is your first *Botolphian* and you have acquired it by circuitous means but would like to receive an email copy each month then just send an email to botolph@virginmedia.com saying 'YES PLEASE.' If you wish to UNsubscribe then send the message 'NO THANKS.'

You will frequently see the 'twin' towns of *Boston* mentioned in these newsletters, - one in Lincolnshire and the other in Massachusetts USA. The relevance to the Society is that the name 'Boston' is said to be a contraction of '*Botolph's Town*.'

Classification of Botolph Church sites:-

- A: **C7 church sites** relevant to Botolph's life.
(i) Founded by radiation from Botolph centres.
(ii) Founded along the course of Botolph's journeys.
- B: **Travellers' churches.**
(i) Founded before AD 800
(ii) Founded between 800 and 1066
(iii) Founded after the Norman Conquest.
- C: **Hanseatic churches** founded as a result of commercial enterprise.
- D: None of the above.

Typical Characteristics of Early St Botolph Churches.

1. Nearly all are in the eastern half of England
2. Most have Saxon foundations.
3. Many lie with 3 miles of a Roman road or well-used waterway.
4. Most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels.
5. Many are strategically placed in areas which represent the beginnings, middles and ends of long journeys.

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